

# SPORTS TOURISM

## CASE STUDY

# POLIVANOVO-DRIVE - EXTREME SPORTS VENUE FOR YOUTH

Global Travel and Tourism Program Russia



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# Polivanovo-Drive – Extreme Sports Venue for Youth

## Introduction

The topic of this case study – Sports Tourism - is something we – authors - are passionate about. Sport and sports tourism, and extreme sports tourism in particular play important role in our lives.

### *Sport*

According to Webster's New World Dictionary and Thesaurus, **sport** is defined as "any activity or experience that gives enjoyment or recreation."

According to Wikipedia ([http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sports\\_tourism](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sports_tourism)) **sport** is an activity that is governed by a set of rules or customs and often engaged in competitively.



There is an impressive range of sports and physical recreation activities available for different people and groups. Interest in healthy lifestyles, fitness and exercise has been gradually growing. Nowadays vast numbers of people are interested in sports. Millions people worldwide are going in for sports and enjoy it. Millions more watch or follow sport at the local, national or international levels. Sport is important part of national culture and heritage, and it gives value to national pride and prestige.

Millions of young people dream of becoming professional athletes. The reality is that very few join the elite group. However sports provide vast range of jobs, occupations and career opportunities. Sport is a massive and growing industry, global business, and tremendous source of income.

Popular sports can draw large crowds of spectators and fans. Large sporting events attract world's leading athletes and public. Facilities used for sports and physical activities provide services for both athletes and spectators. The popularity of sporting activities creates large demand for a wide range of sportswear and equipment and stimulates sports tourism. Participation in sport and sport-oriented activities is rated among the primary purposes of all tourist trips.

### *Sports Tourism*

There are many different definitions of sports tourism, from those involving travel for the purpose of participating in competitive sports, to those involving more leisure or adventure sporting activities. The extent of sports tourism varies.

Sports tourism involves people traveling to participate or to observe sports. These activities may include competing athletes and spectators watching the sporting event. This results in more travel, housing, restaurants and other businesses – all to accommodate the influx of visitors. Sports tourism has consequential impacts: economic, socio-cultural, health and environmental.

Some of the economic impacts are construction of facilities and infrastructure, multiplication effect of sports events that provides income to existing businesses and help them to expand as

well as help start-ups, job creation, government spending, investment, trade, broadcasting rights, merchandising, raising market share of sporting goods.

In socio-cultural terms sports tourism is stimulating multicultural communication and exchange among sports tourists who learn from each other, and better understand the history and culture of the country they visit when they arrive at their destination, even if their main purpose of travel is to participate in sports, or to observe sports.



Sport attractions and facilities capitalize on ability to offer visitors the chance to participate in or watch sport, however they are also providing multipurpose services for both athletes and spectators and operate as venues offering catering, exhibitions and other services and products that could better serve and enrich sports tourists' experience. Thus sports tourism is able to educate visitors showcasing traditional food and costumes, folklore art and crafts and contribute for preservation of traditions

Sports and sports tourism are both a great ways to rest and improve one's health. However there are some health risks involved, that applies both to athletes and fans. Athletes might train too hard. Also, one needs time to adapt to another country or place, and this may sometimes be difficult as, for example, jet lag.

Sports tourism, as is widely known, may also cause violence, which usually occurs among the spectators who are unsatisfied with the announced results. It does not only happen among countries, but also within one country as well. Violence is one of the negative impacts from sports tourism.

The environmental impacts of sports tourism are usually described as negative. It consists of pollution and depletion. Pollution happens basically due to the traffic – big sports events attract more vehicles than usual, increasing air and sound pollution and are also associated with littering and land pollution.

Sport is a key part of the tourism product whether people participate in a sporting activity or attend as spectators. Different kinds of sporting activities are appealing for different individuals and groups. There are a great many kinds of sports tourism. We chose the one, most interesting for us, as our case study topic.

## **Extreme Sports Tourism**

Extreme tourism includes extreme sports (such as skateboarding snowboarding, surfing, bugging, and some other,) dangerous places (mountains, jungle, deserts, caves, etc.), excitement of new challenging experiences. The major attractions are “adrenaline rush,” element of danger, pushing personal boundaries through “living on the edge” activities, and a certain degree of affluence.



Extreme tourism and extreme sports have been recently gaining in popularity. Many people of different ages and occupations see the extreme as a lifestyle choice, finding it a healthy lifestyle,

an effective release from stress, an outlet for their energy. The growing interest has converted extreme into a consumer product. Tourists go mountain biking, skating, boarding, and BMX racing. The demand for extreme tourism has given rise to numerous web-based resources designed to make it easier for those who are interested to source information. Many tour operators are offering activities and ranges of exciting services, holidays, competitions and festivals featuring extreme sports.

The extreme sports and tourism market is very much for younger people, although other groups are increasingly getting interested and involved. The market growth is tied to demographics and has economic limitations, because participation is expensive. However some extreme sports and tourism, such as mountain biking, snowboarding and skateboarding are now mainstreams.

From various types of extreme tourism we have decided to focus on snowboarding – the type of extreme we find most appealing.

## **Snowboarding – the Basics**

Snowboarding is a relatively new winter sport that involves descending a snow-covered slope on a snowboard.

### **History**

The sport was developed in the United States in the 1960s and the 1970s. The growing popularity of snowboarding is reflected by recognition of snowboarding as an official sport: in 1985, the first World Cup was held in Zurs, Austria. Due to the need for universal contest regulations, the ISA (International Snowboard Association) was founded in 1994. Snowboarding became a Winter Olympic Sport in 1998. Today, high-profile snowboarding events like the Olympics, Winter X-Games, and other events are broadcast to a worldwide audience.



The history of snowboarding started with pioneers like Sherman Poppen (the inventor of the first commercially made snowboard called the Snurfer from Muskegon, Michigan), Jake Burton (founder of Burton Snowboards from Londonderry, Vermont), Tom Sims (founder of Sims Snowboards), Mike Olson (GNU Snowboards).

### **Snowboards**

Snowboards come in several different styles, depending on the type of riding intended: The top of the board is typically a layer of acrylic with some form of graphic designed to attract attention, showcase artwork. Snowboard top sheet graphics can be a highly personal statement and many riders spend many hours customizing the look of their boards. The base of the board may also feature graphics, often designed in a manner to make the board's manufacturer recognizable in photos.



## Snowboarding Techniques



Although most people compare snowboarding to skiing, snowboarding techniques are closer to skateboarding and surfing than to skiing.

Snowboarders ride epoxy-fiberglass boards (resembling large skateboarders) with feet strapped on it, and manipulate gravity to go down a ski slope or a specially constructed pipe. The principle of snowboarding is to maintain your balance. In skiing, skiers shift their weight from one ski to the other. In snowboarding, riders shift their weight from heels to toes as well as from one end of the board to the other. To stop the board's motion, they push their heels or toes down hard to

dig the edge of the snowboard into the snow.

Snowboard tricks are aerials or maneuvers performed on snowboards for fun, or in competitions. Most often, these maneuvers are performed on obstacles such as jumps, half pipes, hips, handrails, fun boxes, or ledges, or on the surface of the snow, and many have their origins in earlier board sports such as skateboarding and surfing.

## Snowboarding Market

People usually learn about snowboarding through friends or by word of mouth, decide that it looks like fun, and give it a try. More often than not, they get hooked with it. Snowboarding has exploded as a recreational physical activity over the past two decades. In 2008, selling snowboarding equipment was a \$487 million industry. In 2008, average equipment ran about \$540 including board, boots, and bindings. In 2008, there were 5.1 million participants. Females comprised 25% of snowboarders. There were 6.6 million riders in 2005. Manufacturers believed that the decrease in the number of riders was because of poor weather.

## Snowboarding in Russia

For many people the thought of Russia associates with images of vast snow and cold, and it is very true for winter time. Russian winter lasts from mid-November to mid-March and temperatures are as low as -25c occur in January and February in central Russia, and much lower in Northern parts and Siberia. Long winter and amazing snowfall provide outstanding sporting opportunities – skiing and skating in particular. Although Russia is not the place snowboarding used to be nowadays snowboarding is by far one of the most popular winter sports and is constantly increasing in popularity, especially amongst younger people.



## Most Popular Snowboarding Destinations in Russia

Certain places in Russia are especially attractive for snowboarding. Elbrus and Cheget, Krasnaya Polyana, and some other are rated most popular. We haven't been in any of these places but heard and read a lot.

### *Sheregesh*

The Sheregesh village and skiing resort are situated in Western Siberia near Gornaya Shoriya mountain range. Taiga and the mountain are a truly spectacular combination. Snowcover is four to six meters thick during the winter season, and the first slopes are ready as early as October. Some trails run through the diverse terrain covered with trees and have various levels of steepness. There are also easier tracks, suitable for everyone. The season lasts till early May. Trails mainly run through the forest areas. Ski-lifts, the drop-off options, helicopter and snowbile are offered to visitors. The slope complies with international standards, which permits the resort to host various important events, such as All-Russia Skiing Competition. There are plans to lay 39 new tracks totaling 136 km and to erect 21 ski-lifts. The nearest airport is in Novokuznetsk, which is 200 km from Sheregesh. From Novokuznetsk one can travel by train, covering by bus the last 30 km from the train station to the site.



### *Abzakovo and Bannoye Lake*

Two other major ski resorts – Abzakovo and Bannoye Lake – 49 km from each other are located in the Southern Urals. Here visitors can find a combination of easy gradient woody slopes and well-groomed steep ones. All tracks are equipped with artificial snow machines and regularly cleaned by the snow-groomers. The place is obviously good for beginners. It is also a popular venue for various competitions. The amenities such as aqua park, zoo, various excursions and night club help visitors turn a day trip into a holiday. The season lasts from mid. November till the end of March. Nearest airports are in Magnitogorsk and Beloretsk, which are less than an hour drive. Transfer is available by taxi only.



### *Region of the Mountain Elbrus*

Mount Elbrus is rated as Europe's highest peak. It reaches a height of 5,633m, which means that it has great quality snow regardless of the season. Perfect destination for those who enjoy



extreme on ungroomed tracks and does not care much about lack of amenities. The place is beautiful, and said to have a magic which makes people return again and again. Around Elbrus the season lasts from late December till April, however on the top slopes of the mount it never ends. There is a snowboarding camp here in summer. One can also arrange for some "heli-boarding", being dropped off by a helicopter from the highest point possible or on more unused peaks. Best known resorts in the area are Cheget and Elbrus. Unfortunately they are very popular, which means that you may have to wait in the busy seasons.



### *Krasnaya Polyana*

Of special mention is Krasnaya Polyana - the most sophisticated ski and snowboard resort in Russia that will be the host of the **2014 Winter Olympics**. It is located on the southern side of the Main Caucasus ridge just over 40 km from Adler city- a famous summer destination in Russia on the shore of Black Sea where there is a recently renovated airport and a train station. It is the most accessible mountain resort in the European part of Russia. A flight from Moscow takes 2.5 hours, and a transfer to the station takes 1.5 hours more. Easy access makes hundreds of



Moscow riders spend week-ends at Krasnaya Polyana during the season. The climate is mild and moist, almost subtropical. In winter even on top of the ridge, the temperature rarely drops below -10c. The season lasts from early January till the end of March. All slopes are very much looked after. There are three resorts here – “Alpinka-Service,” “Gornaya Karusel,” and “Laura.”

Sometimes called the "Russian Courchevel", this resort is famous for its well-maintained facilities and overly high prices. The lifts are fast and convenient, the runs are in a very good condition, the local rescue team is considered to be the best in Russia, plus lots of comfortable mini hotels at the village and cozy cafés and bars. The only disadvantages of the resort are its small size and mild climate (affected by the nearby sea), which means that there is a risk to find too little snow at the lower runs even in January.

### *Winter sports near Moscow*

With snow falling for four or five months of the year, Moscow region is another great area for snowboarding. The obvious shortcoming is it is mostly flat and downhill variety is something that should be looked for. In spite of this Moscow boasts several well-designed snow parks that make possible to enjoy snowboarding and downhill-skiing. Most popular snowboarding venues



are situated in the most “mountainous” area near Moscow, the Dmitrov region, and can be reached via Dmitrovskoye Shosse.

## Why We like Snowboarding

Like many other young Moscovites we enjoy extreme of snowboarding. Great weekend means for us meeting with our snowboarding buddies and going to a snow park. Surfing on a steep mountain slope you feel the high speed and weightless freedom. You can cruise and slalom and if you see a suitable take off platform, you bend your knees, increase your speed and lift off, make a turn and land safely. Snowboarding has much to offer:



- Different snowboarding riding styles techniques to choose and master;
- Performing snowboard aerial tricks and high speed descents and experiencing adrenaline rushes;
- Traveling and enjoying the excellent views and landmarks looking for suitable terrains and exciting runs;
- Mastering different kind of terrains, snow conditions and challenges;
- Visiting or competing in competitions and events;
- Networking with fellow snowboarding enthusiasts.

## How Our Project Started

It was autumn. Friday. Not a sunny or exciting day – just the opposite. We were tired and bored and almost sure something must go wrong by the end of the day and spoil the weekend for us. So when we’ve got some extra homework at the end of our “Passport to the World” lesson we would have been upset, but in fact we haven’t.



Our teacher Alla Stanislavovna told us about a Case Study Competition and asked if we would like to participate. We were not particularly interested – at least until we learned the topic – Sports Tourism. This is something what both of us, keen snowboarders, know and enjoy, and the opportunity to develop a case-study captured us before we realized it.

Guess what we were doing all weekend? Generating ideas! We talked about snowboarding, recalled places we visited, and different kinds of people we meet through snowboarding. The more we talked the more clear it was that beyond some happy moments we were also discussing some obstacles and problems.

## Snow parks near Moscow

A great place to go snowboarding is the **Volen Sport Park** just outside of Moscow. It has well developed facilities and great slopes. There are 6 different inclines with elevators and they can be as long as 400 meters. The park also offers eating facilities, cabins and equipment rental at fairly decent rates. The Park is also open 24 hours a day. Volen Sport Park is a seasonal affair and there is only usually good snow between mid December and mid March.



Just opposite Volen is **Yakhroma Park**. It is slightly more expensive than Volen, and boasts impressive



facilities including restaurants and a hotel complex. The slopes, though very well maintained, are somewhat boring for experienced skiers. There is a section reserved for snowboarders that includes a half-pipe and two specially designed slopes. Due to the number of beginners that the park attracts, the queues for the ski lifts can be tediously long.

Ski resort **Sorochany** in 54 km from Moscow at the ecological clean zone of Dmitrievsky region is a large modern all-the-year round resort. Its major

feature is a big artificial mountain – an engineering marvel that appeared as a result of the increasing the base mountain on 30 m. On mountainsides are laid seven traces with height altitude 70-90m. and with length 400-1000m, suitable for beginners and experienced boarders. At boarders' service are double and four rope seats road, towed lift, and bugel rope road. Sorochany is a favorite of many because of the diversity of its slopes, which vary in length, steepness and general difficulty level. However, the quality of the slopes comes at a price. Sorochany is the most expensive ski park in the Moscow area.



The **Leonid Tyagachev's**, or **Shukolovo**, or **Tyagachi** ski club is a favorite among serious skiers. It boasts six challenging slopes that are specially designed with good variations so that you're not simply rolling down the hill. Moreover, the slopes are maintained to the strictest standards. Prices are mid-level. They are cheaper than Sorochany and more expensive than Volen or Yakhroma, but they are good value considering the quality of the park. Among the huge range of other recreational activities on offer here are a snowboarding park, ice-skating rink, bowling alley and sauna. Professional

instructors offer lessons for 500 rubles per hour.

## **Problems**

We certainly would love to travel to other places across Russia as well as located in other countries, but this is hardly possible and affordable for us at the moment. Certainly, it's great for young people like us to have a chance to use a snow park relatively near home. We use for snowboarding some of the venues near Moscow. However there are certain things that affect this experience and make it less enjoyable.

If possible it's better to visit special facilities designed for snowboarding near Moscow on weekdays as the queues at weekends are horrendous. Averagely it is not possible for students who are busy at schools on weekdays.

It is also cheaper on weekdays, which is important, as snowboarding is an expensive pastime. While entrance is free, once inside you have to pay for the use of the lift, which usually costs from 20 rubles to 60 rubles per ride on weekends or 15 rubles to 40 rubles on weekdays. Again, we cannot use this advantage – because of the lessons and homework to do we can ride only on weekends.

Furthermore, full equipment rental will cost a minimum of 300 rubles to 500 rubles per hour, with each consecutive hour becoming cheaper. Guarantees are required when hiring equipment or you can leave an important document such as your passport or driver's license. It would be great to rent equipment on the site, because it's heavy and inconvenient to bring the boards each time, but the equipment offered for hire is not very exciting, besides the queues are long.

Most snow parks are located in the same area near Moscow with a suitable terrain. Unfortunately, our homes are rather far from this area, and we have to travel long to first reach the site and then come back home. The access for driving visitors might be difficult because of the heavy traffic, while non-driving enthusiasts, like us have to use suburban trains, which is fine, except for the need to travel with equipment. The usual way to reach the site from the station is by taxi, which is pretty expensive, because buses or shuttles are either not available or not regular.

Another inconvenience is lack of changing rooms or places suitable for changing clothing and/or keeping personal belongings. For instance, it is always a problem to make some pictures or videos while we are riding, because there is no safe place to keep cameras between descends.

Another thing – we almost always are self-catering and bring some snacks and thermoses with us because at some parks food is offered but at a rather high price, while at some other this service is just basic, and you have wait in line to get a cake and a coffee.

Thus, special facilities are either too expensive for students or too far from home or uncomfortably located or poorly equipped. Prices, crowds on the sites, lack of amenities affect our experience and tend to prevent us and other average young Muscovites from frequenting these parks on a regular basis. To sum all this up: young extreme sports enthusiasts in Moscow are lacking affordable, safe and exciting spaces where they can enjoy sports, meet, interact and network.

## **Consequences**

Finding suitable venues is rather difficult and that's why we often spot and use places on random as temporary snowboarding facilities paying attention to proximity and terrain rather than safety and equipment.



From our friends keen on other extreme sports we know they face the same or even bigger problems. Young extreme fans are often using steps, ledges, railings, streets sidewalks, parking lots and other public places for extreme sports. Another trend is using abandoned spaces. Adults do not accept or appreciate both options commonly pointing out the damage young people cause to commercial and public spaces and dangers involved in being at neglected spaces. But the number of youth taking up adrenaline-inducing challenges is growing, and they certainly like it.

## Needs

All young people need opportunities to interact and network, and public spaces are the areas they chose to engage in various activities appealing to them. However for extreme sports enthusiasts these public spaces are often not available. The need for more venues and facilities clearly ranks as an important priority for this group. However when an extreme sports park is proposed as a potential project in the urban area or countryside, typical reasons for objection include safety and security concerns, public and private property risks, noise and disturbance for the neighborhood. Obstacles to extreme sports venues exist even though it is recognized that young enthusiasts do not have safe alternatives serving their interests.

## Possible Solution

By the end of Sunday we decided what our case study would be about. We agreed it would be great to have an alternative venue serving interests of extreme sports enthusiasts and discussed a ‘model’ sport complex that would meet needs and interests of young people engaged in extreme sports appealing for them. We were racking our brains to figure out things like **where** such venue could be, **why** it might be appealing for customers, **what** it would take to develop and manage it, **how much** it would cost, **who** would be interested to invest, and many other issues we had to consider. We could not help thinking that we did not know where to start and how to continue. But we have already become involved and committed to our idea - a modern extreme sports park near Moscow - safe, well-equipped, comfortable and affordable for young extreme sports enthusiasts. And we were wondering would this dream come true?..

## A Dream – A ‘Model’ Extreme Sports Venue

That is how we saw our dream – a ‘model’ extreme sports venue offering active rest and sports activities all year round.

In winter – snowboarding, downhill and cross-country skiing, hiking, and skating...

Management

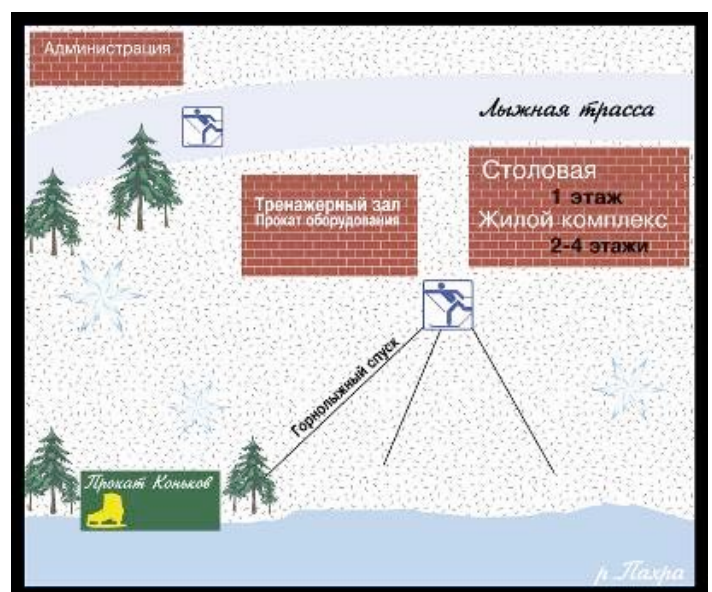
Café – 1<sup>st</sup> floor, lodging – 2<sup>nd</sup> -4<sup>th</sup> floor

Rental Equipment, Fitness and gym room

Ski Track

Ski Slope

Skate Rental





In summer – skateboarding, mountain and cross-country biking, walking and hiking trails, swimming ...

### Management

Café – 1<sup>st</sup> floor, lodging – 2<sup>nd</sup> -4<sup>th</sup> floor

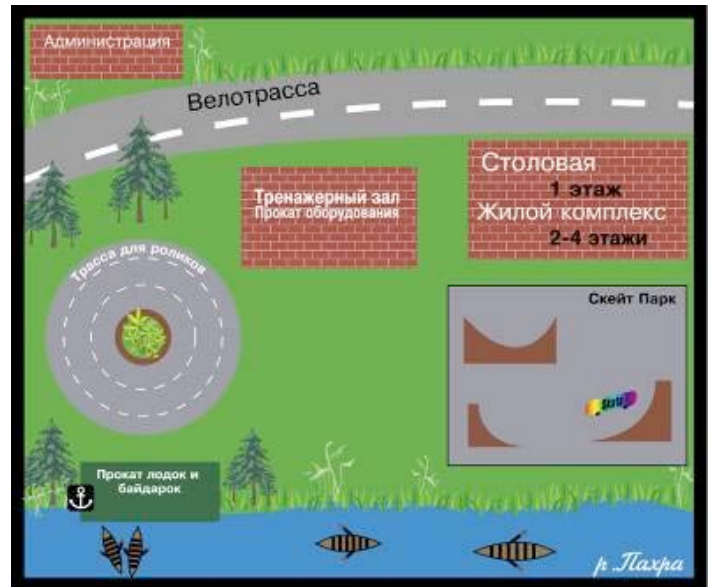
Rental Equipment, Fitness and gym room

Bike Track

Roller Slope

Skate Park

Boats Rental



### Location

A week has passed and for the next weekend our class was planning to go to the countryside to have a picnic. Such day-trips have become a habit. We usually picked up a place no more than an hour away from Moscow – close enough for us to easily visit a place, enjoy a day’s outing and be back home in time for dinner. For this particular Sunday we decided to explore the area near Podolsk, around the **Polivanovo station** some 20 kilometers from Moscow.



We went by a suburban train, and when we reached the place, we liked the beautiful scenery, and many places to rest, explore and enjoy. It was a nice and easy day-trip. We chatted, sang and laughed a lot. At some point we found a place for a campfire - a clearing on the outskirts of the Polivanovo village and got out our snacks. Our campfire was burning; we were enjoying the view and talking – about school, exams, about our future....



Suddenly Yulia said, addressing Nastya: “Just look at these slopes. Any thoughts?”  
Nastya looked around and joyfully cried – “Well, I wish these hills were covered with snow and I had my **‘fanera’**<sup>1</sup> with me.”  
“In fact, the terrain is perfect...” said Yulia.  
“Don’t you think we found an answer to the question “where?” asked Nastya.  
“Seems like that,” answered Yulia.

<sup>1</sup> Fanera is how young snowboarders sometimes call a snowboard.

Our classmates were intrigued, and we explained what we were talking about – a project related to an extreme sports venue. Most of our friends were skeptical. But we asked them not to discourage us – we were determined to continue our research.

Suddenly, we heard a noise and few minutes later saw a stranger coming out of the wood to the clearing. The rather old and shabbily dressed stranger turned out to be a local warden. He was making his rounds, heard our voices and decided to check what was going on. We were surprised to meet a warden – nothing around looked worth guarding - and asked him about it. Oleg Ivanovitch – that was the warden’s name – offered to show us the property in his charge.

We were curious and followed him. On the way Oleg Ivanovitch said he heard our conversation about how the surrounding slopes look in the winter and explained that years ago many tourists came here to ski on a brae of the Pakhra river. The area was quite popular and even hosted some skiing competitions. *Later a local villager shared with us an old photo featuring one of such competitions- it is posted on this page.* In few minutes we reached the place where Oleg Ivanovitch was leading us. The site looked abandoned and neglected. It used to be a pioneer camp – recreational facility for children. But for several decades it has not been used and gradually declined.

The day was coming to an end and it was time to return home. We said ‘good buy’ to Oleg Ivanovitch and started for the train. On the way to Moscow we talked about our idea, and agreed we shall come back soon – to learn more about the place. It seemed to us we found a location for our idea to come true.

## Asking Our Snowboarding Buddies

Back home we rushed to our computers to discuss the idea with our snowboarding buddies.



[fartuna\_girl]: **Hi, buddies!** 🤖

[enotik]: **Folks! We have a wonderful idea! We’d like to develop a snowboarding park, actually all sort of**

**extreme sports venue. What do you think?** 🤖 **HELP!** 🤖

[fartuna\_girl]: **Knock-knock, anybody here?!!** 🤖

[zelenyi]: **I think . . . it is hopeless!** 🤖

[sanches]: **And I think it makes sense... A dream-job! Do you need help?** 🤖

[sergey]: **You won’t find a proper place!** 🤖

[fartuna\_girl]: **We think we did – we were there today, it’s near Podolsk.** 🤖

[sergey]: **Well done!** 🤖

[fartuna\_girl]: **You know, the area is beautiful and perfect for snowboarding. You need to go there and see yourself.**

[sanches]: **And by the way, the area near Podolsk in not polluted – I heard about it.** 🤖

[zelenyi]: **So, then... Oh, I wish I could go and ride right now!!!** 🤖

[fartuna\_girl]: Look, the site is really good. And mind, there is a former pioneer camp adjacent to the slopes... Few buildings, unoccupied for years, but not completely ruined, and there is electricity, and access roads. Not bad for a start, isn't it?

[enotik]: Ok! We need to ask more people about this idea. Let's find out what snowboarding fans think of what they lack and what they need! 😊

[fartuna\_girl]: And if you have any suggestions right now, please, let us know... Don't be shy!

[mixa]: I think you need a concept and a plan. 🤔

[enotik]: What kind of concept?

[mixa]: Well, something that makes the site you talk about, special. It may be just three things for a start: easy to travel, cheap and comfortable. 🤔

[fartuna\_girl]: I see! 🤔

[enotik]: Cheap and cool!

[sergey]: It's also a way to show young people how they could spend their pastime.

[enotik]: A good respond to current economic squeeze!

[sanches]: Ok, but what will happen in the summer?

[mixa]: No problem! I know people who will be happy to come for skateboarding. 🤔

[sanches]: Folks, do you remember the 'babushka' selling "pirozhki"<sup>2</sup> in Tyagochi<sup>3</sup>? Food is really important! It makes visitors happy – don't forget about it.

[zelenyi]: Those cakes were really good. I'd like to have a couple right now.

[sergey]: How about raising finance? It's quite sufficient!

[enotik]: Sponsors might be interested... But we need to convince them the project is viable.

[fartuna\_girl]: Absolutely! 😊

[vanes]: How the snowboarders will move to the top of the hills? On foot? Makes sense to think about some kind of lifts – what type is better?

[enotik]: Don't know exactly yet – but it should be more comfortable than in Sarachany.

[sanches]: How many traces do you want to have?

[fartuna\_girl]: Maybe three traces of varying difficulty for different skills level - from beginners to experts.

[sergey]: I'd like to have a changing room, equipment rental and a café.

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<sup>2</sup> "Pirozhki" means cakes.

<sup>3</sup> That is how we call Leonid Tyagochyov's snow park.

[enotik]: It is a good idea! It would be much convenient to leave the bags in the change room

[mixa]: Don't forget about transportation – a minibus from the train station will do. 🍀

[sanches]: Oh, I agree! I have already spent a fortune going to Tyagochi by taxi.

[zelenyi]: It sounds really good! Let's have the park at my backyard?

[enotik]: We have already found a place – the one we told you about, the Polivanovo village near Podolsk, remember? Beyond fantastic terrain, the area has facilities we hope to transform into a modern extreme sports complex. 🍀

[fartuna\_girl]: The buildings are old and neglected, but potentially they can offer lodging. The project may appeal to local community and administration.

[mixa]: You know, it may come true!

[fartuna\_girl]: Ok, Thanks a lot, friends! Let's call it a day. Be in touch! Good night!

[enotik]: Good night!

[mixa]: Good luck and see you tomorrow!

## What Our Snowboarding Buddies Thought and Advised

The summary of the discussion was like that

- A proper place – non-polluted area, enough land, suitable slopes;
- The former pioneer camp facilities: few buildings, unoccupied for years, but not completely ruined;
- Basic infrastructure, electricity, and access roads;
- Features to focus on: easy to travel, cheap and comfortable – a great way to organize a pastime and respond to the economic squeeze;
- What will happen in the summer – a year-round venue;
- Catering and food;
- Costs of transformation and grooming the area – raising finances;
- Facilities – lifts, tracks, changing rooms, rentals, café;
- Transfers from the station, etc.

It was midnight, and we had to terminate our discussion, because we had to go to school next morning. Our buddies gave us lots of support and useful hints about **why** a venue specifically designed to provide new opportunities and fun to young extreme sports fans **should be** and **what** specifically it would **offer** to the youth for active rest and sporting activities. We felt more engaged and excited about the idea.



## Generating Interest and Positive Responds

Next morning we met Alla Stanislavovna and shared with her our idea. Our presentation was full of emotions and snowboarding terms. At some point our teacher asked us to slow down and tell her what exactly we suggest. We started again, and when we mentioned the name “Polivanovo”, it turned out that Alla Stanislavovna knew about the area and visited it, cycling with her family. However she couldn’t understand some of the words we used, and we developed a special list of terms for our teacher reference. Provided with explanation of some snowboarding terms and details, Alla Stanislavovna pointed out additional opportunities and attractions of the place she knew through her visits to the Polivanovo area, and encouraged us to continue our research.

### *A List of Snowboarding Terms*

- **Big-Air** - Big jumping-off place. Competitions (or demonstration performances) when the snowboard rider gains speed and jumps from the big jumping-off place performing various tricks during the flight. Such competitions represent the greatest interest for spectators. The jump is carefully calculated for it to be long and entertaining, but at the same time the least dangerous for the athlete. Big-air is referred to the category of technical freestyle.
- **Fanera (Doska)** - youth extreme fans’ name for snowboard.
- **Gonyat' (katnut')** - to ride a snowboard at high speed.
- **Half-pipe** - a downhill trough with vertical lips on each side, resembling half of a cylinder. Basically it is used in snowboarding. Competitions in half-pipe are referred to the category of the technical freestyle and are included into the program of the winter Olympic Games.
- **Jibs** - any type of fixture which can be ridden with the board/skis either parallel or perpendicular to (ground), while spinning around on, or ridden and jumped or tricked from. Many jib features resemble outdoor items used when snowboarding in urban areas (stair rails, benches, tables, etc.)
  - **Rail**: A metal bar, either rounded or with a small flat surface, which a skier or snowboarder can slide across (called "jibbing").
  - **Funbox**: Similar to a rail, but wider with a polyethylene surface. May or may not have metal edges.
  - **Trees**: used as natural surfaces and can be found either on or off the trails.
- **Jumps** - features typically constructed of snow to perform tricks such as grabs and twists or spins while in the air from a jump. Types of jumps in a park may consist of:
  - **Tabletop**: A jump that looks somewhat like a table or trapezoid in which one takes off from an incline (the lip), clear a flat part (the table), and lands on a downslope (the landing)
  - **Step-down**: A jump in which the landing is lower than the takeoff
  - **Step-up**: A jump in which the landing is higher than the takeoff
  - **Gap**: A jump that has a large gap in between the take off and landing, instead of a table.

- **Hip**: A jump with one landing, which is perpendicular to the take off

- **Spine**: A jump with two landings, which are perpendicular to the take off. Similar to a hip, but with a landing on both sides.

- **Snowboard** - a board, which resembles a wide ski with the ability to glide on snow. A size and shape variance in the boards accommodates different people, skill levels, snow types, and riding styles.
- **Snowboarders** – people who use this equipment for sport and fun.
- **Snowboarding** -a sport that involves descending a snow-covered slope on a snowboard that is attached to one's feet using a boot/binding interface. It is similar to skiing, but inspired by surfing and skateboarding

## From Location to Destination

### Accessibility

We found a map, explored the area and realized the advantages of the location. Less than an hour from Moscow by suburban train, within easy reach from the station and access roads and foot paths to it, the Polivanovo village looked promising as a potential venue visited by extreme sports fans for leisure, entertainment and competitive purposes. The venue is accessible from Moscow and neighboring places, and it is able to attract both driving and non-driving visitors from the capital and local towns.

### The Area

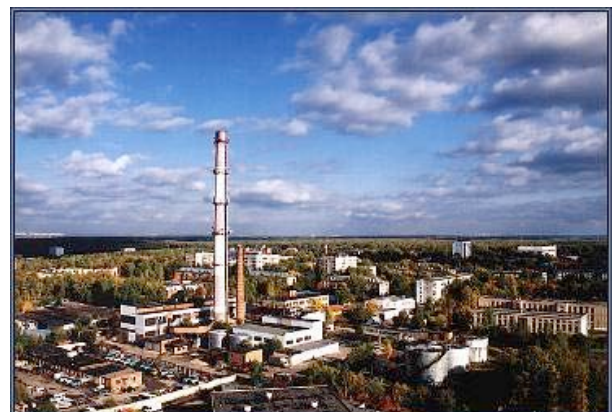
The area contains terrain with distinctive characteristics that allow snowboarding and mountain skiing in winter and skateboarding and mountain cycling in summer. The site boasts hills, mountainsides and slopes suitable for the traces with different complexity and extension. These natural features can be turned to the favor of the sports venue. Other benefits are wonderful nature, great views, mixed forests, a river, plenty of sights to fill a day, and several interesting places to visit - all together providing opportunities to sporting, cycling, walking, hiking, boating, swimming and touring.

### Visitor Attractions

The area offers some really interesting sites, and opportunities for visitors to combine sporting activities and recreation with the chance to explore some towns, country estates and heritage objects.

#### *Troitsk – Scientific Centre*

Located on the Desna River some 37 km southwest of Moscow on Kaluzhskoe highway Troitsk was first mentioned in 1646 as a settlement of Troitskoye. It was renamed Troitsk and granted town status in 1977. Troitsk is home to a number of famous research institutes.



### ***Ostafyevo country-estate***

The Ostafyevo Estate is located 30 km to the south from Moscow and belongs to the number of the most famous estates near Moscow. Among the famous Russians visiting and staying here were historian Nikolai Karamzin, who wrote here his famous "History of the Russian State", and our national pride and most loved and respected poet Alexander Pushkin.

### ***Dubrovitsy***

Dubrovitsy Estate exists since the second part of the 17<sup>th</sup> century and is famous with a white-stone church – a rare example of Baroque in Russian church architecture. The surroundings are picturesque and provide great opportunity for a pleasant walk and sightseeing.



### ***Podolsk***

The city of Podolsk grew out of the village Podol, which in the 18th century belonged to the Danilov Monastery in Moscow. The status of city was granted by Catherine the Great in 1791. Before the Revolution of 1917 Podolsk was among the most industrialized cities in Russia. The Singer Company factory producing sewing machines was operating here.



### ***Melikhovo***

Another interesting estate and a charming garden is Melikhovo— a home of the famous writer and dramatist of the 19<sup>th</sup> century Anton Chekov.

### **Infrastructure**

The site we spotted as potential venue for snowboarding is near the Polivanovo village with buildings, electricity and water supply, as well as shops, a school, a church, a bus stop and a small operating recreation facility. It is also located conveniently to meet the needs of people who are interested to come for a day and have fun, and so that people living there can use it easily.

### **Potential of the Abandoned Property**

We also think there is an immense potential of converting the abandoned recreation property that used to be a pioneer camp years ago into a countryside extreme sports venue for youth. It has been abandoned through decades and deprived of its normal cycle of economic and social use. Now one can see a magnet for garbage, collapsing buildings, broken glass, wasted materials, and graffiti. It is an increasingly dangerous



social and environmental eyesore. However it has the resources which we believe we can make use of offering to young extreme fans near Moscow. Among these valuable resources are:

- Relatively large territory near a main road;
- Topography and physical characteristics responsive to the layout with dramatic features and challenging elements for extreme sports;
- Convenient location for day-visitors and people living here to use it easily.
- A perfect setting for winter and summer sports and rest, activity-packed day or holiday.

### **A Catalyst for Remarkable Change**

We see that conversion of the abandoned property into a countryside extreme sports park - can become a catalyst for remarkable change. Incentives for local community, potential investors, and other stakeholders are obvious. Neglected building and territory will be transformed into facilities responsive to the extreme sports enthusiasts' and local people needs, providing instructional, recreational and competitive opportunities in a safer, more challenging and fun environment not generally found at a neighborhood level. A target group for this project are young people age 15-23 living in Moscow and areas near Moscow willing to enjoy extreme sports that may not be feasible in the neighborhood in a safe, inclusive and fun environment at affordable cost.

### **Impacts**

Among the positive impacts are:

- Well-kept and managed space, more acceptable and preferable for the community and environmentally friendlier.
- Sports and destination resources.
- Improved infrastructure compatible with the landscape and natural characteristics of the area.
- Enhanced the attractiveness of the area.
- New jobs, generating income, increased local trade
- Finance required for development must come from commercial sector or be acquired from public agencies outside the destination, for example regional or central government not to become a burden for community.
- It is possible to do our bit for environment and develop an environmentally protected area taking eco-friendly approach: encouraging visitors to reduce their own carbon footprint by using public transportation (trains and special or ordinary buses) to reach the site and enjoying car-free activities such a walking and cycling, eating locally produced food and self-catering while reducing waste, consider options of the sports venue being powered by wind turbine or solar panels and saving energy through effective management.



## Survey

Potential and impacts of our idea were quite clear to us, but we wanted to be sure it will be appealing to potential visitors and local people.

The purpose of the survey was to confirm our assumptions and ensure our plans are desirable for the target group. We also wanted to engage potential visitors and local people in debates about the most appropriate kind of development and encourage potential users and local residents to offer suggestions for the new venue design and to take a proactive role in the site transformation process and new venue creation and maintenance.



The respondents for our initial survey were students of the schools located in the village Polivanovo and nearby village Yakovlevo, as well as our schoolmates in Moscow.

### Questionnaire

Questions:	Answers & Suggestions:
Your age:	Age group: 13-16
Your sex:	Male/Female.
You live in ...:	Polivanovo. Yakovlevo. Moscow.
Are you doing sports?	Yes. No. I prefer physical training. No facilities for sports available.
If you go in for sports, are you doing sports in some sort of a club or on your own?	In a club. On my own.
What is your attitude towards extreme sports like snowboarding, skateboarding, mountain cycling?	I am an enthusiast. Would like to try. I don't care about it.
What prevents you from going in for the extreme sports?	There is no possibility. It is far from me. There is nobody to accompany. I'm afraid to.
In case the extreme sports venue opens in the Moscow vicinity, would you go there?	Certainly! Sometimes. Never. Probably I shall try.
Your suggestions to the initiators of the project:	On the organization of services - On the organization of products and facilities - On the organization of the visitors' transportation -

### Survey Results

Having processed the questionnaires we came with the following results:

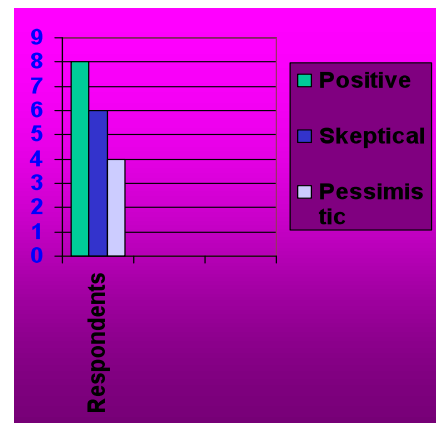
- 60 persons questioned - 20 per school;
- 38 boys and 22 girls;
- Age from 13 to 16;
- 39 persons interested in sporting activities and regularly go in for sports
- 19 Moscovites were using sports facilities, 11 respondents were training on their own, 16 preferred active rest and physical training;
- 14 persons were extreme sports enthusiasts, the other 26 would like to try (10 of 14 girls added "very much".)
- 11 respondents were indifferent to extreme sports (we hope to change their attitude.)



- 17 persons stated extreme sports facilities were not available (expensive equipment, high cost of rental service, transportation expenses).
- 51 persons were enthusiastic about the idea of a new extreme sports venue for youth (interestingly, not all of them were extreme fans, however they appreciated the idea of having a place for networking and communication, participating or watching challenging activities, mastering skills and sharing achievements.)
- Only 4 respondents were pessimistic about the project (we'll keep trying to persuade them in the benefits they can gain through the project.)
- Suggestions included: services to beginners and experts, training and coaching for individuals and groups, competitions and events of different elements of self-management and responsibility, facility to be self-financing and not a burden for the local community.

## More Survey

Apart from the target group, we were interested in local adults' opinions. Among the respondents were teachers, parents, villagers, representative of local administration, and a forester. Total 18 persons, age 19 to 78 with no notion about extreme sports such as snowboarding, skateboarding etc. were questioned. The question was: "If we organize the sports venue for youth through restoration of the neglected pioneer camp near the village Polivanovo, what the results would be?"

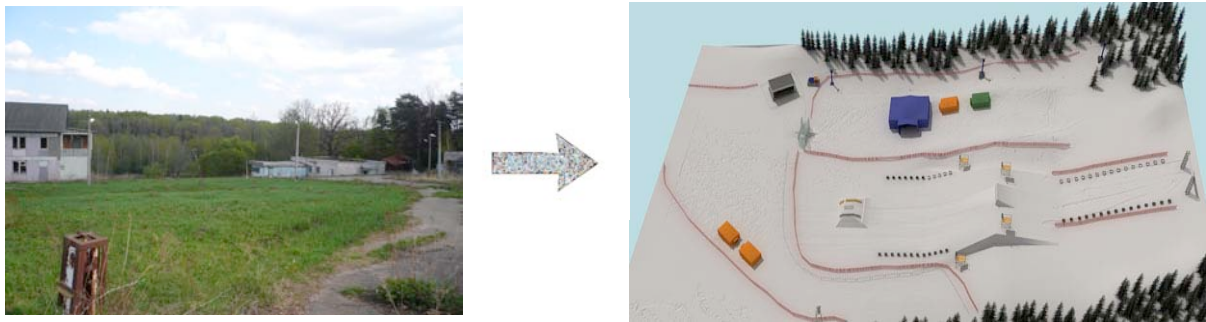


Answers varied. Some respondents were skeptical or concerned, while more expressed appreciation and support. Here are some samples of responses:

- The teacher of chemistry pessimistically pointed out: "One cannot get back to the old times, when the pioneer camp functioned, now you won't find neither sponsors nor the permissions."
- An elderly lady living in Polivanovo was concerned about "the youth being noisy and behaving in disturbing way."
- Local administration was not enthused about our suggestion. It took a month to receive an answer to our question. The answer was all about «this sort of projects requires large financial investments which are impossible at the recession time.» They also wrote that the school in the village Polivanovo is quite small and there are plenty of facilities and opportunities for local youth activities and leisure.
- The sports teacher from Polivanovo school expressed support and added she would gladly work at the sports venue as instructor or coach.
- A lady from the village whom we met at the bus stop said she would prefer to work near home and asked if we are interested in hiring an experienced cook and clean lady.
- The local warden Oleg Ivanovitch, was excited and said he was looking forward to the changes.
- Our parents said they would be happy that instead of racing around Moscow and looking for cheap venues or using abandoned spaces and they would know where exactly we are and that we are busy, safe and happy.

The majority of our respondents were positive and supportive.

## From Dreams to Plans



Actual development of a Junior Park through transformation of the abandoned property will depend on many factors.

We need to negotiate approval of authorities and permission for renovation of the abandoned property. We hope our plans will be approved and supported as a comprehensive solution for revitalization of a neglected site and a response to the problem of extreme sports fans been drawn away from public spaces to a new site appealing to them. Our first approach to the local authorities left them indifferent.

We need to consider and discuss the extent and outcomes of the abandoned site transformation and revitalization with engineers, designers, officials and the public. The territory of the neglected object with the area of approximately 3-4 hectares, on the rising ground, has a slope towards the river Pakhra convenient for winter and summer sporting activities, however certain efforts and grooming are required to improve the terrain quality and safety. The asphalted paths and open spaces suitable for tracks and runs and equipment installation require repair and maintenance. Neglected constructions are in a poor but realistically restorable state. There are some restorable constructions, electric poles with the cut off wires. Conversation of the area will certainly demand financial investments, but not extensive as we anticipate.

The acquisition/rent costs may differ widely. It does not seem that current proprietor has available assets to start transformation or development of the object; hence the price might be reasonable. We plan to contact the property owners and talk to them about possibilities which maximize the utilization of neglected facilities where previous plans may have failed.

The estimated costs for required conversion work (repair and renovation of the territory, facilities, and lightning system) and purchase of basic equipment are high. We may need to raise as much as over 840,000 euro. We certainly hope it would be a collaborative process and will develop a well-prepared, professional and potentially lucrative business plans to approach possible investors and supporters. We need to make more calculations and work out a strategy to ensure that facility will be self-financing and not a burden for project managers, investors and local community. According to our draft plan renovation investment may pay itself off after 36 months.

## The SWOT-Analysis

<b>Strengths</b>	<b>Weaknesses</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Well-managed facilities instead of neglected space;</li> <li>- A year-round sports venue with opportunities to develop, showcase and appreciate action skills and festival like atmosphere;</li> <li>- A wide range of outdoor sporting activities;</li> <li>- Large and dynamic market group;</li> <li>- Accessibility from Moscow and surrounding towns;</li> <li>- Availability of land and additional attractions;</li> <li>- Ecologically pure location;</li> <li>- Suitable terrain</li> <li>- Basic infrastructure;</li> <li>- Community interest and approval of the changes;</li> <li>- Potential users' interest and appreciation.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Lack of managerial and business skills for project implementation;</li> <li>- Competition with existing snow parks near Moscow;</li> <li>- Estimated costs for required conversion work (repair and renovation of the territory, facilities, and lightning system) and purchase of basic equipment are high;</li> <li>- Investors might be not interested;</li> <li>- Government funding might be not available;</li> <li>- Permission, extent and outcomes of the abandoned site transformation and revitalization includes many participating sides and require a significant amount of expertise and paperwork.</li> </ul>
<b>Opportunities</b>	<b>Threats</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Young extreme sports' needs and interests met;</li> <li>- Transformation of a declining and potentially dangerous space into a venue valuable for visitors and local people;</li> <li>- Improved infrastructure and facilities;</li> <li>- Enhanced attractiveness of the area;</li> <li>- Focus on social, economic and environmental impact;</li> <li>- Facilities restored and maintained with extra income provided by visitors;               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Money brought by visitors can be used to maintain, improve and restore the venue;</li> </ul> </li> <li>- New part-time and full-time employability options and trade opportunities;</li> <li>- Job and volunteering opportunities for young people;</li> <li>- Meeting the needs of the community in sports facilities and diversified income;</li> <li>- Community morale and income growth;</li> <li>- Benefits to the area, region and visitors attractions;</li> <li>- Help residents to stay and earn for living in the village;</li> <li>- Young people health, skills and self-esteem improved.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Finance raising is not easy during the recession;</li> <li>- Pressure on the local environment: pollution, overcrowding, noise, waste and litter;</li> <li>- Tension between visitors and residents of the nearby villages;</li> <li>- Possible legislation restrictions related to renovation of the abandoned property and land use;</li> <li>- Ultimate decline of visitors' interest;</li> <li>- Recession might affect demand and cause slowdown.</li> </ul>



## Conclusions

Our research convinced us that we have found a great candidate for transformation into youth extreme sports park. Polivanovo has something to offer everyone and you can make the most of the place getting away from the city and routine, have change and focus on recharging your batteries.

The costs of revitalization of the abandoned property will be far outweighed by the benefits it will reap. An ugly, dangerous and neglected space will turn into a well-kept and managed infrastructure compatible with the landscape and natural characteristics of the area, more acceptable and preferable for the community and environmentally friendlier. A year-round sports venue with opportunities to develop, showcase and appreciate the challenging action skills and festival-like atmosphere will guaranteed to be a great hit and will upgrade the level of the local community generating income, providing new part-time and full-time employability options and economic benefits.

We do not have millions for development of a luxury sport club, but we have a plan to offer and incentives to suggest to the stakeholders. We have already had a lot of support for the idea. We hope it will work.

The extreme sports enthusiasts soon might be packing up and migrating to the Polivanovo-Drive - a venue near the Polivanovo village just 25 kilometers from Moscow.



## Teachers' Note

Case Study activity and content may be used within GTTP "Passport to the World" curriculum. Activities and methodology are useful for organizing surveys and field-trips and projects designed and implemented by students in relation with GTTP activities, projects and events.

GTTP Russia Teacher: Alla Kochetova

# **GTTP Russia**

## **Sports Tourism**

### **Lesson Plan**

#### **Overview**

Working in group, students review various sports and range of sports tourism activities and identify multiple ways each can be connected to sports and sports tourism. Through class discussion groups of students choose the types of sports tourism most appealing to them and realize how sports tourism enhances an individual's quality of life and provides new and exciting business opportunities. Additional options may include further research through surveys, field trips and FAM visits to available sports tourism destinations and facilities in the neighborhood, analyzing collected materials, exploring various opportunities of further development/improvement of the current state and develop a project related to the Sports tourism topic, most interesting for them.

#### **Objectives/ Supplemental Options**

Students will be able to:

- Research and present a sport most interesting and exciting for them as athletes and/or spectators;
- Explore the present state and opportunities for development for a particular type of sports tourism;
- Present and defend a position based on specific information;
- Research and present sports tourism destinations and facilities;
- Analyze how well available sports tourism venues meet the interest and needs of target groups and local communities;
- Conduct surveys, field trips and FAM visits;
- Prepare and analyze information related to sports tourism current state and possible future opportunities;
- Apply travel and tourism opportunities to an entrepreneurial venture.